

**Remnant Life Church**  
April 9, 2017  
**The Day that Changed Everything**  
**Easter – Part 3**

Matt 28:6; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6

HE IS NOT HERE!

- The wonderful thing about Easter is that it is God's ultimate revelation and answer to the sinful condition of man's heart
    - Not that He did not reveal Himself in other ways
    - The glory of His creation; His power demonstrated time and again with the Israelites, the life of Christ
    - But perhaps nowhere else are we given the full summation of God's ultimate response, to all of humanity, settled once and for all, then the empty tomb that we celebrate this morning
  - You can learn a great deal about a person from their tomb
    - The most famous was discovered less than 100 years ago
    - On November 4, 1922, after 10 years of searching, a British Egyptologist named Howard Carter uncovered the tomb of a pharaoh that had been sealed for 3200 years
    - It began by his uncovering just one step that led to a staircase that led to a sealed door
    - Tutankhamun ruled for 10 years from around 1334 to 1324 BC and took power at the age of 9
    - It took 10 years to remove and catalogue all of the treasure
      - Full sized throne
      - Several beds, chairs, and stools
      - A full-sized, gold covered chariot
      - A painted barge
      - Chests filled with gold
      - 413 figures many of them life-sized
      - Even the game board of an Egyptian game
      - All designed to be of help to the king in the afterlife
  - But compare all of that to the tomb of Jesus
    - Cut out of a wall of rock in a garden
    - A huge, heavy round stone rolled in front of the entrance
    - Nothing inside except Jesus wrapped in the burial clothes of the time
  - Because it was not what was found in the tomb that made it so important but what was not – JESUS was not there and it forever changed the world
1. God's Power through Jesus was Ultimate
    - a. Every tomb is known by who is buried there

- i. They pyramid tombs of Egypt – mummified bodies of the pharaohs
    - ii. Westminster Abbey in London – English nobles and royalty
    - iii. In Saudi Arabia is Mohammed's tomb – stone coffin containing his bones
    - iv. In Moscow there is a plexiglass coffin where the remains of Lenin can be viewed
    - v. Arlington Cemetery in DC – JFK and Kennedy family; President Howard Taft; Robert Todd Lincoln; the Challenger shuttle astronauts; Earl Warren; Douglas MacArthur; Thurgood Marshall
  - b. But the Garden Tomb of Jesus is known because it was empty
  - c. Because God had a plan
    - i. Begins in the Garden of Eden (**Gen 3:15**)
    - ii. Prophet Isaiah wrote 20 prophecies regarding Jesus – 1000 years before Jesus was born and 600 years before crucifixion was developed
    - iii. Throughout his book he gives detailed accounts of Jesus' life and what He will endure
- There are those who have tried to refute the power of God contending that Jesus did not really die but was only unconscious (Swoon Theory)
  - Scourged or beaten until unable to walk
  - Spikes driven through His wrists and feet
  - Hanging to suffocate
  - Broken legs to keep them from pushing up to get a breath
  - 1.5 – 2 ton stone rolled down a channel; at least 15 - 20 men to move it
- Some say the disciples came and took Jesus
  - The men who abandoned Jesus in the Garden
  - Move a stone that weighed between 1.5 and 2 tons that would have taken between 15 and 20 men to move
  - Overpower the guards – **Matt 27:66**
    - Roman soldiers only had one purpose – obey orders
    - To fail your assignment at your post meant death
  - Removed Jesus while taking the time to neatly remove and leave His burial clothes behind
  - Then somehow staged his appearances to nearly 600 people on several different occasions in multiple locations for nearly 6 weeks
- Some have tried to explain it by saying they were at the wrong tomb?
  - This was not just an obscure hole dug in haste
    - Carefully prepared
    - A rich Pharisee by the name of Joseph (**Matt 27:57-60**)
  - Not a grave yard but a solitary tomb in a garden
  - The women went to Jesus' tomb
  - Peter and John ran to the place where he was buried; did not search for it
  - The guards were posted at Jesus' tomb
- In more recent times scholar after scholar have tried to refute the resurrection through empirical, scientific evidence – and what have been the results?

- Josh McDowell – as a self-proclaimed agnostic in college; write a paper refuting Christianity instead proved it to himself after more than 700 hours of investigative study
    - Authored more than 115 books
    - *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (1972)
    - *Evidence for the Resurrection* (2009)
  - Prof Thomas Arnold – author of a multi-volume study of Rome and holder of the Chair of Modern History at Oxford University
    - “I have been used for many years to study the histories of other times, and to examine and weigh the evidence of those who have written about them, and I know of no one fact in the history of mankind which is proved by better and fuller evidence of every sort, to the understanding of a fair inquirer, than the great sign which God has given us that Christ died and rose again from the dead”
  - Literary scholar CS Lewis (*The Screwtape Letters*; *The Chronicles of Narnia*) was a professor of Medieval and Renaissance literature at Cambridge University and had always believed Christians to simply “be wrong” about their beliefs
    - After evaluating the basis and evidence for Christianity, Lewis concluded that in other religions there was “no such historical claim as in Christianity.” His knowledge of literature forced him to treat the Gospel record as a trustworthy account. “I was by now too experienced in literary criticism to regard the Gospels as myth.” Finally, contrary to his strong stand against Christianity, Professor Lewis had to make an intelligent decision: “You must picture me alone in my study, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. I gave in, and admitted that God was God, and knelt and prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England.”
  - The power of God raising Jesus from dead is evidenced by the empty tomb and undeniable.
2. Through the empty tomb, God shows us that His greatest love is people
- a. **Luke 19:10** - *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*
  - b. **Luke 15:3-7** - *Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.*
    - i. Why? – Because of His great love for His creation
    - ii. And for how He sees you

- c. A gem dealer was strolling the aisles at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show when he noticed a blue-violet stone the size and shape of a potato. He looked it over, then, as calmly as he could, asked the vendor, “You want \$15 for this?” The seller, realizing the rock wasn’t as pretty as others in the bin, lowered the price to \$10. The stone has since been certified as a 1,905-carat natural star sapphire, about 800 carats larger than the largest stone of its kind., It was appraised at \$2.28 million. You see it took a lover of stones to recognize the sapphire’s worth. It took the Lover of Souls to recognize the true value of ordinary looking people like us.
  - d. We see the flaws, the short-comings, and the frailties in each other and in ourselves
  - e. God sees His child and it is why Jesus was born and lived, not in royalty, but in obscurity
    - i. To live among and minister to the the poor, the lepers, the social outcasts
    - ii. God’s love for us far surpasses what we see and call lovely and what the world calls acceptable
    - iii. He is the lover of our souls!
3. The empty tomb means that His presence is here with us today
- a. Killing Jesus was like trying to get rid of a dandelion by blowing the white furry seeds off the stem
  - b. Death, the tomb, even satan and all the demons of hell could not hold the one who sees all of creation ([Heb 4:13](#))
  - c. Consider again the other tomb
    - i. Descended the revealed steps to the entrance
    - ii. Howard Carter looked in for the first time by candle-light
    - iii. His sponsor was with him and said, “Do you see anything?”
    - iv. “Yes, marvelous things!”
    - v. He ascended the stairs, placed his face in his hands and wept
    - vi. Those with him assumed out of joy and excitement
      - 1. He said, “10 years ago I dug 18” from that very step – I was so close but I missed it”
- The empty tomb shouts the love of God this morning
    - Not for the wealthy, the privileged, the learned, the gifted, the beautiful or a select few
    - He shouts His love this morning for you and for me
  - The question is – how do you respond?
    - Do you ignore His presence and live your life according to your own will, desires, and gratification?
    - Or do you surrender your life and invite Him to live in your heart?
  - You can go and visit the graves of the famous
    - I have stood at the gravesite of JFK in Arlington, VA and seen the eternal flame

- Stood at the grave of Benjamin Franklin at Christ Church in center city Philadelphia
- The grave of John Smith in York one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence
- But you will not stand at the grave site of Jesus Christ because the place he laid is not His grave
  - He is risen, He is alive, and He is coming again for His church
  - The tomb is empty and, because of that fact, our hearts are filled with His presence!